

13 February 2009

To: Co-chairs Sen. E. Meyer and Rep. R. Roy, and to the Environment Committee,  
Connecticut General Assembly

From: Paul Bates, Chair., Town of Groton Harbor Management Comm.; 47 Church St,  
Noank, Ct., 06340; 860-536-3325

Re: Proposed Bill No. 5476: Act Concerning the Speed of Vessels in the Mystic River.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of proposed bill no. 5476.

The current act covering the Mystic River was created almost 60 years ago. It uses antiquated terminology and does not cover the area where it is now needed.

60 years ago there were two shipyards on the Mystic River, with about 50 dock slips and a hand full of moorings. Today, from Palmers cove on up the Mystic River there are eleven marinas, each having from 50 slips to 250 slips, with about 1,000 slips total and about 1,000 moorings.

The Marine Trades have done an excellent job of attracting people, with their boats, to enjoy the waters of eastern Connecticut.

As is often said, however, "each basket of apples has a rotten one or two". With this many more boats and boaters, there are many more rotten apples. Thus, it is time to revise this regulation, and to make the regulation very clear so that boaters know its limits, and for its limits to be readily enforceable.

As one would expect, the problem is greater at the mouth of the river. By the time most boaters are yelled at by 3 or 4 marinas, they slow down; marinas that are not adjacent to the channel do not feel the pain too much.

Currently, Sec. 15-16 starts at the beacon in Noank, while just south is the constrained area between Mouse Island and the ledges where, on a Sunday afternoon in summer, it is like a boiling caldron. Currently, Sec. 15-16 does not cover this area.

Sec. 15-16 states: "When approaching or passing, and while within two hundred feet of any wharf, pier, or dock.....". What is the meaning here? When approaching or passing what? "...within two hundred feet...." With no markings on the water---unlike a football field---this is hard to judge. Add to this the common freeway phenomenon, "road rage". An alarming situation.

Thank you for allowing me to be heard, and for your careful consideration of this issue. I urge you to enact this measure.

Sincerely, Paul Bates

